



DECEMBER ISSUE

WHO WE ARE

The Asian Art Society features an online catalogue every month listing quality works of Asian art that have been thoroughly vetted by our select members, who are the in-house experts.

By bringing together a group of trusted dealers specializing in Asian art, our platform offers a unique collection of works of art that collectors will not find anywhere else online. To ensure the highest standards, gallery membership is by invitation only and determined by a selection committee of influential gallerists.

  /AsianArtSociety

Cover Image: Vajrahumkara
presented by Hollywood gallery on
p. 198

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHINA	6
GANDHARA	42
INDIA	46
SOUTH ASIA	76
JAPAN	90
KOREA	94
HIMALAYA	98



SALE

DECEMBER ARTWORKS

Pieces are published and changed each month. The objects are presented with a full description and corresponding dealers contact information. Unlike auction sites or other platforms, we empower collectors to interact directly with the member dealers for enquiries and purchases by clicking on the e-mail address.

In order to guarantee the quality of pieces available in the catalogues, objects are systematically validated by all our select members, who are the in-house experts. Collectors are therefore encouraged to decide and buy with complete confidence. In addition to this the Asian Art Society proposes a seven-day full money back return policy should the buyer not feel totally satisfied with a purchase. Items are presented by categories please check the table of contents.

Feel free to ask the price if the artwork is listed with a price on request.

01

INCENSE BURNER

China
17th / 18th century
20 cm x 15 cm
Price on request

An unusual bronze incense burner in the form of a finger citron supported on a bronze branch with a rich gold splash patina.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Brandt Asian Art
M: +44 (0)7774 989 661
E: brandt@nildram.co.uk
W: www.brandtasianart.com





02

BRUSH POT

China

20th century

Zitan wood

34 cm (h) x 21 cm (w)

Price on request

A substantial, naturally formed brush pot from a gnarled tree root. Rich patina and great weight.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

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M: +44 (0)7774 989 661

E: brandt@nildram.co.uk

W: www.brandtasianart.com







03

JADE GROUP

China
Ming dynasty
16th/17th century
Length: 6 cm
Price on request

A jade group of three rams, the dark rich brown skin covering the carving, all the animals with drawn up hooves.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Brandt Asian Art
M: +44 (0)7774 989 661
E: brandt@nildram.co.uk
W: www.brandtasianart.com





O4

SNUFF BOTTLE

China
Yangzhou School
1850-1900
Height: 6,3 cm
Price on request

A glass snuff bottle, of tapering ovoid form with a cylindrical neck, carved using the cinnabar-red overlay on a transparent emerald-green ground with on one main side an immortal accompanied by his attendant on a scrolling cloud pouring from a vessel into the mouth of a dragon rising from frothy waves, a bat in flight above; the reverse with an immortal astride his tiger on a wisp of cloud, looking back at a second bat; the foot carved with a wave pattern.

In the heady days of excessive wealth in cities such as Yangzhou and its neighbor Suzhou, the rich merchants of the day were both ardent snuff takers and patrons of the arts. Through their new-found wealth they could acquire the trappings of the literati as easily as the officials at the Palace. It was in such an atmosphere that the Yangzhou School of carving developed, with commercial carvers of glass, having a minimum level of scholarly insight supplying rich, but naïve patrons who aspired to literati practices. This seeming superficiality did not prevent the Yangzhou School from producing such excellent examples as the dramatic bottle shown here.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Clare Chu Asian Art LLC
M.: +1.310.980.4084
E.: clarechuasianart@gmail.com
W: www.clarechuasianart.com





05

SNUFF BOTTLE

China

Yangzhou School

1856

Height: 6 cm

Provenance:

Arthur Gadsby, Hong Kong

Hugh M. Moss Ltd., Hong Kong, June 1970

Peter Fawcett, U.K. and thence by descent

Publication:

Hugh M. Moss, *An Exhibition of Chinese Snuff Bottles*, June 1970, no. 212

Price on request

A glass snuff bottle, of meiping form, with an everted, straightened lip, carved using the sapphire-blue overlay on a white ground with a continuous river scene of a figure paddling in a boat with a planter of blossoming prunus at the bow, a pavilion on the bank beneath a pine tree, a crane lifting from the water, all beneath a cyclical date reading 'Gengchen shi yue zuo,' ('Made in the tenth month of the Gengchen year').

Little is known about the makers of this group of bottles known collectively as the Yangzhou School, that name given because of the probability that these bottles were made in or near to Yangzhou. Less than 10% of the extant examples bear a cyclical date. Increasingly, we have come to know more about the owners and collectors who commissioned these bottles as their names (or artnames) are carved using the overlay color, sometimes within a raised oval seal and occasionally, along the narrow sides of the bottle as part of an inscription. The owner's names that appear most frequently on this group of bottles are Li Junting, Yunting, and Wang Su (1794-1877), who was a painter and literatus from the Yangzhou area. Less frequently seen are names such as Xu Nong, Qiutang, Jifang and Dieyuan.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Clare Chu Asian Art LLC

M.: +1.310.980.4084

E.: clarechuasianart@gmail.com

W: www.clarechuasianart.com





06

SNUFF BOTTLE

China

1780-1850

Height: 7,4 cm

Provenance:

Mitchell Bistany, MA

Price on request

A lac burgauté snuff bottle, of flattened, shield shape, the black lacquered ground inlaid on both sides within oval panels with colored silver and gold foil, one side with a long-tailed bird perched in the branches of a blossoming prunus tree issuing from rockwork, the reverse with a scholar seated under a willow tree in a mountainous landscape, the narrow sides, shoulders, neck and foot covered with a geometric foliate design, the base with an apocryphal *Qianlong nian zhi* mark, together with its original matching stopper.

The Chinese developed the art of inlaid lacquer wares, known as lac burgauté during the Song, Yuan and Ming periods, reaching a height of popularity during the Qing period. It was not only popular in China, but in Korea and Japan also. The Ryukyu Islands played an important role in this development, as they were a foreign dependency of the Ming Imperial Court. Only in the early 17th century did these Islands, where the lacquer artists lived and worked, come under the rule of the Japanese, and they did not become officially part of Japan until 1879 when the last King of Okinawa was overthrown. As a key position in the trading routes between Japan and China, the artistic development of lacquer was heavily influenced by the interchange of styles between the two countries. By the time the Japanese began producing lac burgauté snuff bottles after 1854 for the export market, the wares that they produced were highly sophisticated and of technical artistry.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Clare Chu Asian Art LLC

M.: +1.310.980.4084

E.: clarechuasianart@gmail.com

W: www.clarechuasianart.com



Lac burgauté snuff bottles were made in Japan for the export market from the middle of the 19th century onwards and appear much more frequently than their Chinese counterpart. Whilst Chinese-made bottles are distinctive for their 'pictorial' subject matter and surrounding symmetrical patterned borders, the Japanese bottles are usually 'patterned' with a varied diaper, often asymmetrically. Japanese bottles were made on both metal and wood usually with a brass or silver lip whilst the earlier Chinese versions were produced on wood bases. The use of 'dusting' of gold on top of the gold lacquer was a purely Japanese technique and does not occur on Chinese lac burgauté examples. Whilst all of these characteristic features should make identifying the source of these bottles reasonably easy, confusion often reigns when faced with the bottle itself.



07

SNUFF BOTTLE

China

1780-1850

Height: 6,6 cm

Provenance:

Clare (Lawrence) Chu Private, London,
1992

Alexander Brody and thence by descent

Price on request

A porcelain snuff bottle, of tapered cylindrical form with rounded shoulders and a cylindrical neck, decorated in underglaze blue with a continuous design of lotus flower-heads surrounded by leafy scrolls.

The design of stylized lotus flower-heads surrounded by scrolling leaves was a popular motif on Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasty porcelain wares, emulating originally from Indian wares from the seventh century onwards. As a design it translates well onto the continuous smooth surfaces of porcelain snuff bottles, lending a regal tone to a more common container for snuff in the nineteenth century.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Clare Chu Asian Art LLC

M.: +1.310.980.4084

E.: clarechuasianart@gmail.com

W: www.clarechuasianart.com



08

COMB

China
Dong Minority
Wood, metal
8 cm x 5 cm
Price: 450 USD

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Thomas Murray
M.: +1 415.378.0716
E.: thomas@tmurrayarts.com
W.: www.tmurrayarts.com







09

BRONZE WEIGHT

China

Tang dynasty (618–907)

Height: 4,5 cm

Price on request

A bronze ovoid weight with loop terminal for suspension, cast to the top with a flowerhead above a band of lotus petals and alternating lotus buds and prunus heads.

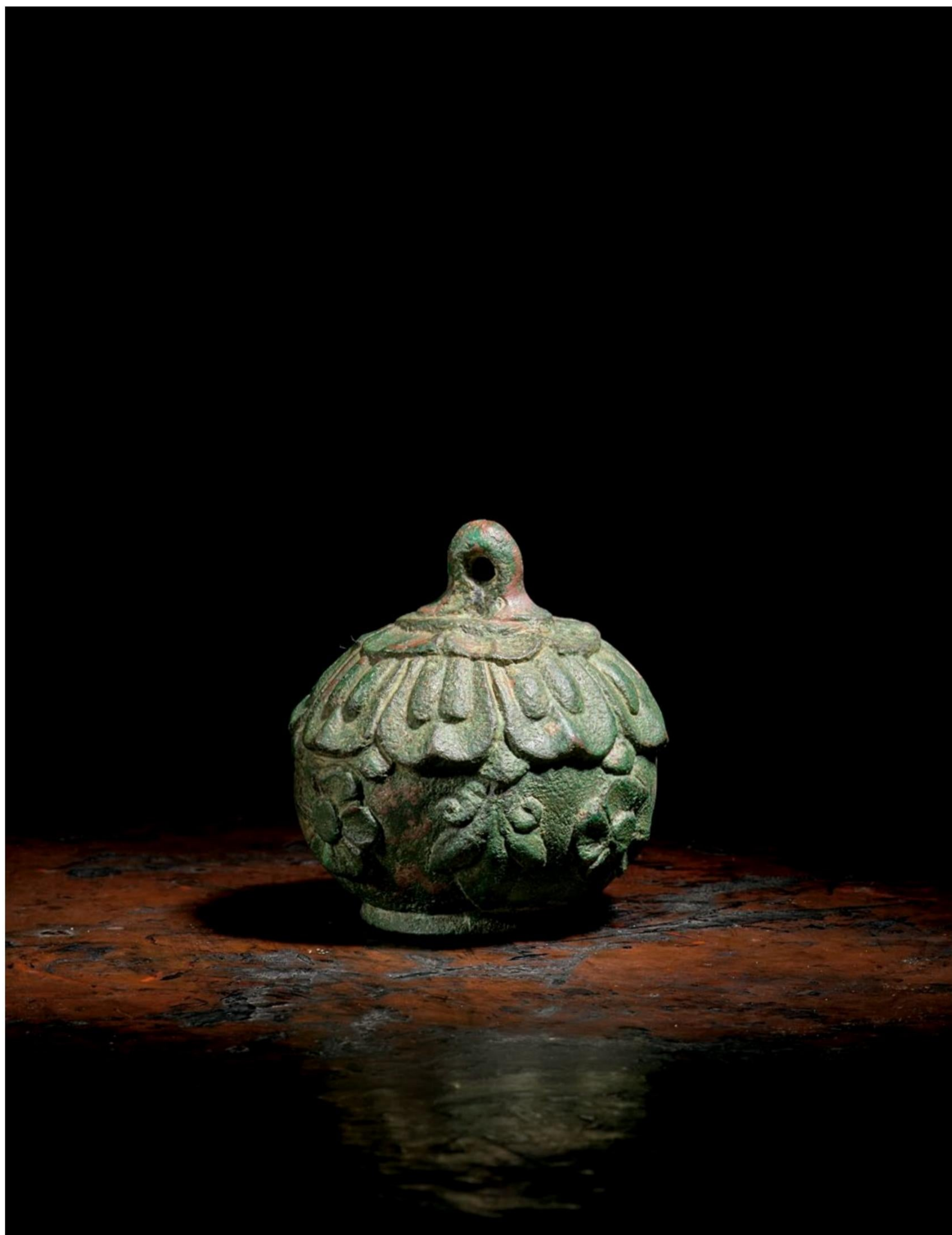
OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Rasti Fine Art Ltd.

M.: +852 2415 1888

E.: gallery@rastifineart.com

W: www.rastifineart.com



10

**A RARE LARGE CARVED
BAMBOO INCENSE
BURNER**

China

Ming dynasty

16th century

Height: 17,5 cm

Width: 20,5 cm

Provenance:

Private Hong Kong collection

Price on request

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Sue Ollemans

M.: + 44 (0) 7775 566 356

E.: sue@ollemans.com

W: www.ollemans.com







11

BUDDHA HEAD

Ancient Gandhara region

3rd-4th century

Schist

Height: 33 cm

Provenance:

Rare Art Inc, New York, 1984

Price on request

This figure of Buddha has a face that is characteristic of the codes of Gandhāra "Greco-Buddhist" art, exuding a feeling of plenitude and piety. His half-closed eyelids are a sign of deep meditation. The mouth, small and fleshy, almost sensual, is characteristic of the Gandharian naturalistic style, as is the hair treated in fine undulating locks brought back in a bun to the top of the skull, at the location of the u ī a.

A perfect illustration of Gandhāra art at its apogee, this head is an example of the Indo-Hellenistic artistic cross-fertilisation that came to full expression under the royal patronage of the Ku ā s or Yuezhi sovereigns (1st c BC-240 AD). Alongside ancient aniconic representations, this Buddha figure deploys an iconography whose codes it fixes for a long time. It bears witness to the contributions of Greek statuary in the classicism of this Apollonian face, its naturalism, evident in the plastic harmony of the face, as well as Indo-Parthian influences in the stylistic codes, notably the representation of the chignon in the image of those of the cavalry princes.

The material of choice for this Greco-Buddhist art, schist is found in a variety of forms throughout the Gandhāra region and the surrounding area, and the use of this soft stone means that it is easy to work with, resulting, as here, in faces with incredibly supple modelling. The mouth, which is particularly sensitive, is a fine example. The fabric of the drape with which the Blessed was clothed can be made out, as can the shape of the halo, leading us to believe that this fragment belonged to a monumental ensemble.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Christophe Hioco

T: +33 (0) 1 53 30 09 65

E: info@galeriehioco.com

W: www.galeriehioco.com







12

HEAD OF SŪRYA

Uttar Pradesh, India
Gupta period
4th - 5th century
Terracotta
Height: 21 cm
Provenance:
French private collection
Price on request

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Christophe Hioco
T: +33 (0) 1 53 30 09 65
E: info@galeriehioco.com
W: www.galeriehioco.com

The god Sūrya, god of the Sun, is probably represented here. He wears a serene, subtle indolent expression, while his full lips seem to be smiling in a knowing way. Heavy eyelids fall over his almond-shaped eyes, surmounting a straight, thin nose. Despite the absence of some of its attributes, these features are characteristic of the representation of Sūrya during the Gupta period, as are the well-drawn curls that frame his round face. A richly ornamented diadem surmounts the god's head, giving him a majestic aura that was once underlined by a nimbus, which only a part has been preserved from the ravages of time. The left earring is also preserved, a testimony to the care given to ornamentation in the Gupta period.

The Gupta period is often referred to as the golden age of Indian art. The important development of art and literature, as well as the emergence of numerous regional workshops, gave rise to a taste for ornamentation, as well as for the refined character of representations. Terracotta became a material of choice for artists, as this head of Sūrya shows. Terracotta was given a major decorative role, particularly in the ornamentation of temples and stupas, which were entirely covered with sculptures, pillars and lintels. Terracotta is used for both secular and mythological representations, and this work belongs to the second category, bearing witness to the know-how of Bangladeshi artists.

In fact, Gupta art has often come down to us in religious form; this is probably due to the quality of execution and the particular care given to this type of work. This representation of the Sun God is a virtuoso demonstration of Gupta art and its codes of beauty. The softness of the features and their atypical elegance is characteristic of this period, as is the richness of the ornamentation and jewellery. The use of terracotta, which gradually declined thereafter (with the exception of the Bengal region), is also very characteristic of this period. The degree of preservation of this work should also be emphasised, despite the apparent fragility of the terracotta.







13

PADMAPANI AVALOKITESHVARA

Kashmir, India
8-9th century
Bronze with silver and copper inlay
Height: 16 cm
Provenance:
Benny Rustenburg (1940-2017)
Price on request

This extraordinarily beautiful image of Padmapani is remarkable for its serenity and its sense of active radiation of calm to its viewer. Its creator has masterfully given the face of Padmapani a look in which his eyes gaze both inwardly at his own tranquil mind and outwardly with a feeling of love towards the suffering people he serves.

The present image's gentle and loving demeanour is heightened by the addition of red copper lips, nipples and bellybutton, which lend it a sense of passion and warmth both of which being so necessary to Padmapani's active saving of all suffering beings.

Padmapani sits on a lotus petal base with his legs perfectly crossed in a meditation position on top of a round solar disc onto which his royal garments spill below his legs. The garments show a design composed of triangular and solar round shapes which mimic the silk garments which Kashmiri rulers and their wives wore. Such fabrics would have more than likely come from silk manufacturers in Sasanian dynasty Iran (3rd – 7th cent CE) where there were many such centres.

A deerskin is draped over his left shoulder, the Buddha himself preached his first sermon immediately after his Enlightenment in the Deer Park at Sarnāth in North India and this deerskin should be regarded as symbolic reminder of this world-changing moment. In his left hand Padmapani holds the stalk of a lotus which may be seen at his shoulder.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Hollywood Galleries
T.: +852 2559 8688
+852 2541 6338
E.: hollywoodgalleries@gmail.com
W: www.hollywood-galleries.com



Most importantly and quite clearly defined here, we can see in the frontmost crown leaf the image of Amitabha Buddha. He is the 'head' of the Lotus family to which Padmapani belongs and is the presiding deity of the so-called 'Western Paradise' realm where it is believed that those practitioners who have passed through the lower realms of rebirth will sojourn briefly before their final rebirth.

It is a thought worth having - although quite impossible to 'prove' - that perhaps through this image's history (and it certainly has a long one) at least one of its owners might just have reached the 'final' state in which they realized the nature of what was real and what was unreal and achieved it directly through their involvement with, and meditation on this very beautiful statue.

David Templeman, Monash University

Bibliography:

Kalha a, Kalha a's Rājatarāgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir. Trans: R.A.Stein.

Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2009.

Naudou, J. Buddhists of Kashmir. Agamm Kala Prakashan, Delhi. 1980.

Pal, Pratapaditya. Bronzes of Kashmir. Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt. Graz, Austria. 1975.

Pal, Pratapaditya. The Arts of Kashmir. Asia Society and Museum, New York. 2007.







14

A LEAF FROM THE DEVI MAHATMYA: HOMAGE OF THE GODS

Guler, India

Circa 1850

Opaque watercolor heightened
with gold on paper

22 cm x 32 cm

Provenance:

Collection of the Marquess of
Tweeddale

Sotheby's New York, 16 & 17

September 1998, lot 561

Private collection, United States

Price on request

This bright and striking painting depicts a delegation of gods, led by Indra and Agni, who worship the various forms of the great goddess Devi: Indrani, Lakshmi, Brahmani, Maheshvari, Varahi, Bhairavi, Narasimhi, Kaumari, and Kali at the forefront. The painting is in the Kangra style, which became well established in the Guler State by the mid-eighteenth century. The detailed rendering of each figure, with bright orange, green and light pink hues, reflect the evolution of the Guler style throughout the nineteenth-century. The distinct orange horizon is particularly telling of its date.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Kapoor Galleries

M.: +1 (212) 794-2300

E.: info@kapoors.com

W: www.kapoors.com





15

INDIAN CLAY
FIGURES

Attributed to Jadunath Pal
 Krishnanagar, India
 19th century
 Clay, hair, cloth
 Height: 28,6 cm (high and under)
 Price on request

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

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 M.: +1 (212) 794-2300
 E.: info@kapoors.com
 W: www.kapoors.com

Krishnanagar, a province of Bengal, has a long history of clay modeling which began in the mid-18th century when Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy (r. 1728–1783) established potteries in the region in order to create religious idols (Chose, 44–45). While clay figurines were traditionally limited to figures of deities from the Hindu pantheon, the Maharaja's introduction of the Hindu practice of *Barwari Puja* (community worship) created a large and diverse clientele for clay modeling. Clay scenes made for group worship began including figures of human attendants that served the clay gods. These human figures soon became popular on their own, encouraged by the Western demand for realistic representations of the people, plants, and animals of India (Chatterjee, 208).

The practice reached its zenith in the late 19th century, when such figurines were considered national treasures and were often sent to international exhibitions to represent India. In particular, the Pal family garnered much renown for their exceptional skill in the craft, the most famous of whom was Jadunath Pal (1821–1920). An article written for the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1888 recounts that:

The figures made by [the Pal family] have acquired great celebrity, and they have repeatedly gained medals and certificates in most of the International Exhibitions held since 1851. There is considerable delicacy and fineness in their work; the figures are instinct [sic] with life and expression, and their pose and action are excellent.

(Mukharji, 59)

The writer continues that Jadunath Pal in particular had “no equal in India in this kind of work” (Mukharji, 63).

The present set, representing a variety of Indian castes,



is attributed to Jadunath Pal, who often included the contributions of specialist tradesmen in his work—the clothing was made not by modelers, but by actual tailors, and if a figure was accessorized with a basket or a necklace, they often came directly from the professionals themselves, giving the figures an exceptional realism. While many of the figures are missing the implements of their trade that would once have distinguished them from one another, the delicate positioning of their bodies and their animated appearance nevertheless bring them to life. Not only were these figures once outfitted with real clothing and tools, but also with human hair. While this novel feature is now missing on a majority of the figures, the largest of the group—an elderly man with a wonderfully articulated stomach and a string of beads around his neck—still retains his original patch of hair.

See a similar group by Jadunath Pal which was exhibited at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880 and gifted to the National Gallery of Victoria by the India Commission of the Melbourne International Exhibition (acc. ST 40409-40414).

References:

Chatterjee, S., *People of Clay: Portrait Objects in the Peabody Essex Museum*, Museum History Journal, 2013.

Chose, B., *Traditional Arts and Crafts of West Bengal: a sociological survey*, Papyrus, Calcutta, 1981.

Mukharji, T. N., *Art Manufactures of India: specially compiled for the Glasgow International Exhibition*, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1888.





16

ILLUSTRATION TO THE 'LARGE' GULER-BASOHLI BHAGAVATA PURANA: SATADHANVA, AKRURA, AND KRATVARMA IN DISCUSSION

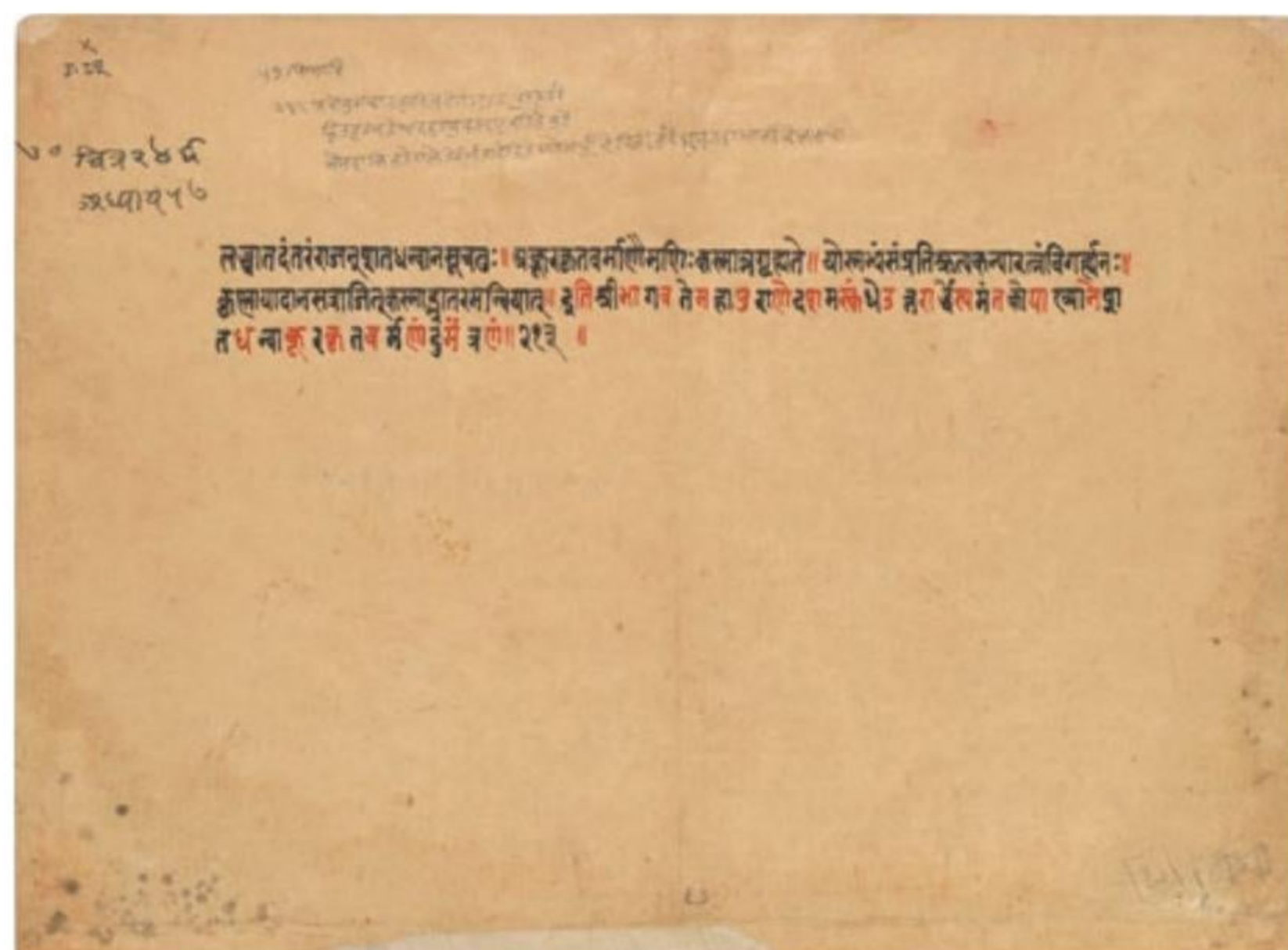
Attributed to the first generation after
Nainsukh and Manaku
Guler-Basohli, India
Circa 1760–1765
Opaque watercolor heightened with
gold on paper
Image: 27,4 cm x 38 cm
Folio: 29,7 cm x 40,8 cm
Price on request

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Kapoor Galleries
M.: +1 (212) 794-2300
E.: info@kapoors.com
W: www.kapoors.com

The present illustration comes from the tenth book of the Bhagavata Purana which describes episodes from the life of Krishna. This episode recounts the story of the Syamantaka, a precious gem which was presented to Satrajit by the sun god Surya and accounted for the god's dazzling appearance. Krishna becomes embroiled in the gem's repeated theft and recovery after being wrongfully accused of stealing it by Satrajit. When Krishna recovers the jewel and returns it to Satrajit to clear his name, Satrajit has a change of heart and offers Krishna both the Syamantaka jewel and his beautiful daughter, Satyabhama, who was considered a jewel among women. While Krishna refuses the gift of the jewel, he accepts Satyabhama as his new wife, angering Akrura and Kratvarma who had sought Satyabhama's hand for their own. Akrura and Kratvarma appear here trying to convince Satadhanva to kill Satrajit for his indiscretion and steal the gem for himself.

The three men appear framed in a large double-paned window. The bearded Satadhanva, on the left, listens to the mustachioed Akrura and Kratvarma on the right as they plot to steal the precious gem. All three wear *jamias* with bold patterns that complement the gold geometric motif of the terrace walls outside. This image utilizes the unusually large format in a striking way, filling it with prominent yet simplified architectural elements rather than breaking up the space with small details—an example of how the younger generation of Seu family artists were able to throw off the constraints of the traditional miniaturist.





The present painting comes from a series referred to by Archer as the 'Large' Guler-Basohli Bhagavata Purana or the 'Fifth' Basohli Bhagavata Purana of 1760–1765. In her discussion of four paintings from the same set in the Chester Beatty Library, Linda York Leach explains:

The series, by a number of different hands, is one of the richest sources of information about the specific ways in which Pahari miniaturists gradually relaxed their styles of drawing and developed a cleaner, more open and more naturalistic idiom. (L.Y. Leach, p.1048)

B.N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer note that the series is often ascribed to Manaku's son, Fattu, who lived for a time with his uncle Nainsukh, and thus incorporated the styles of both masters into his own work (Goswamy, p. 689). Compare to a folio from the same series at the Philadelphia Museum of Art depicting *Uddhava visiting Vrindavan at Krishna's Bidding* (acc. 1996-120-2). The Philadelphia folio exhibits a similar format, with Uddhava and Vrindavan framed within a red, double-paned window, and surrounded by stark architectural forms. See also a folio from the 'Large' Guler-Basohli Bhagavata Purana depicting the return of the Syamantaka, published by Archer in *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, 1973, Basohli, 22(xii).

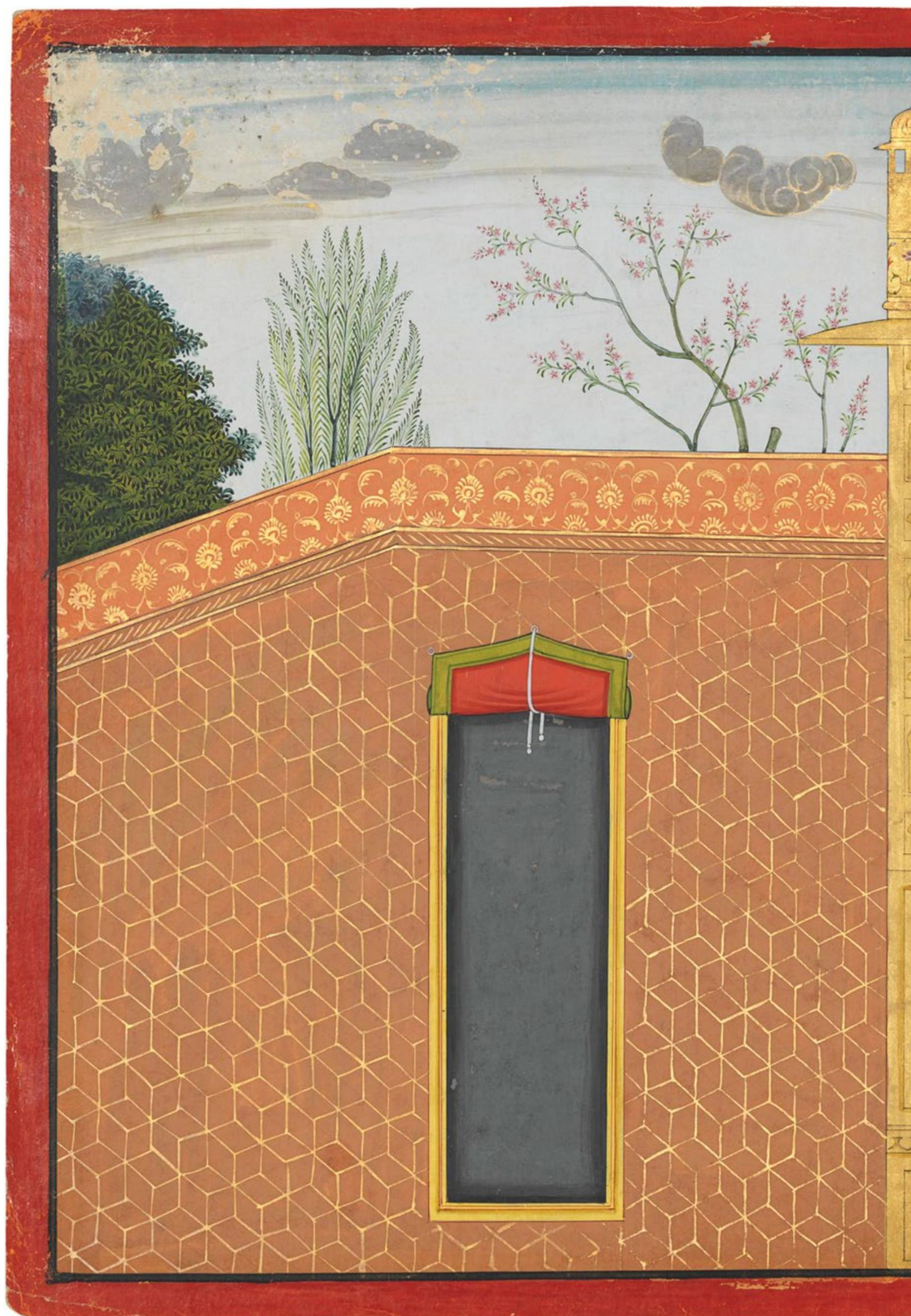
References:

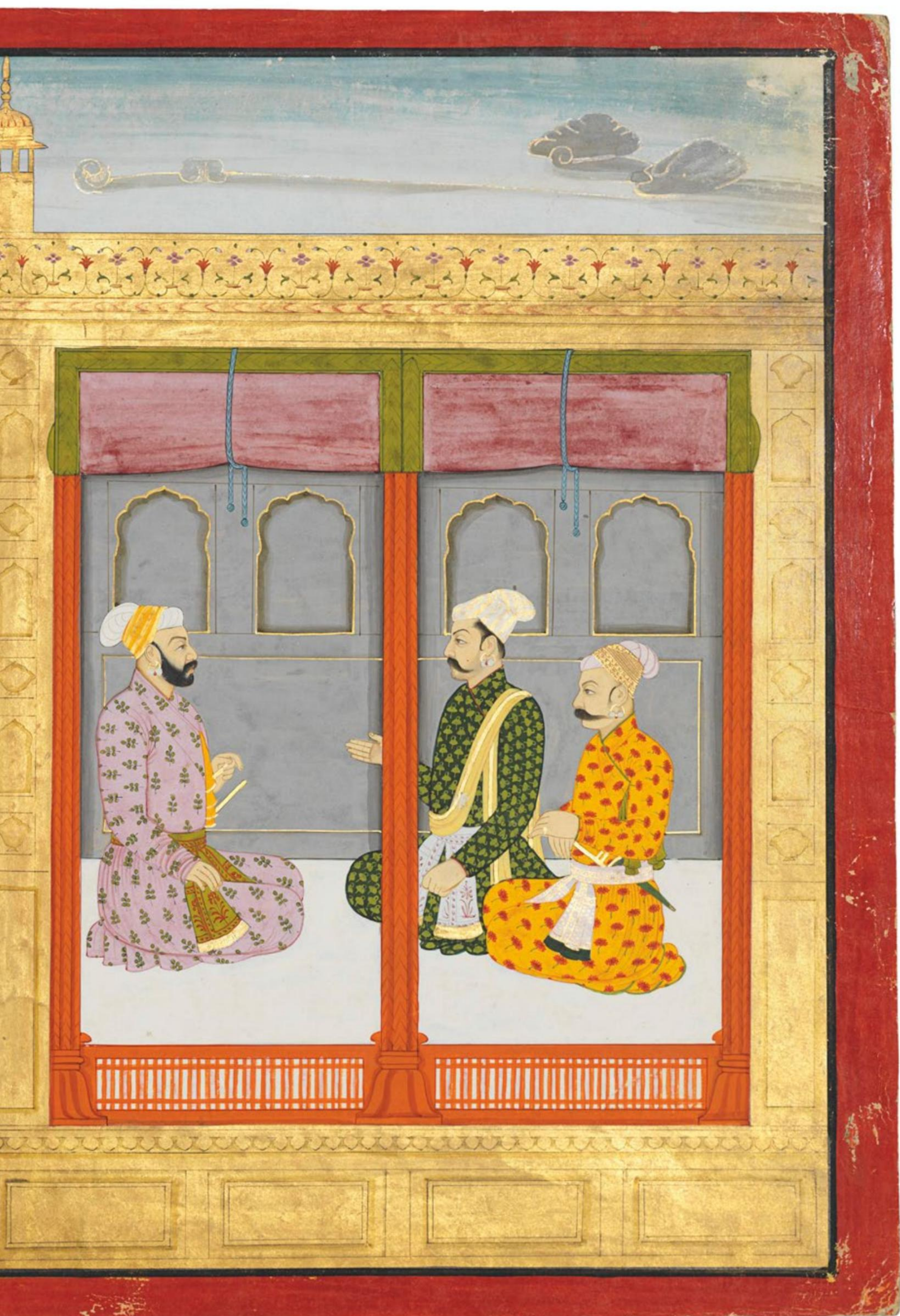
Goswamy (ed.), et al., *Masters of Indian Painting*, New Delhi, 2011.

L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, Vol.II, 1995.

Comp:

<https://www.philamuseum.org/collection/object/90036>





17

**A GOLD REPOUSSE
BRACELET WITH
PROTOME FINIALS**

Bengal, India

Late 19th century

Inset with green stones glass

Diam: 5,3 cm (internal measurement)

Weight: 65,1 grs

Price: 1.800 euros

These bracelets were normally presented to bridegrooms in Bengal and are striking in the depth of repousse work.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Sue Ollemans

M.: + 44 (0) 7775 566 356

E.: sue@ollemans.com

W: www.ollemans.com



18

A RARE PAIR OF ROYAL CAMEL-GUNS OR ZAMBURAK, FORMERLY BELONGING TO 'MAHARAJA' THAKUR BAHADUR SINGH OF AJMER (1857-1903)

Rajasthan, Ajmer, India

Samvat 1952 (1895 CE)

Each cannon in polychrome wood and koftgari gold steel, inscribed 'Maharaj Shri Bahadur Singh Ji, Rajasthan Masuda Samvat 1952'.

Length: 116 cm (each)

Provenance:

Rao Saheb Bahadur Singh, Thakur of Masuda (reigned 1863-1903)

William Edward Simon (1927-2000), United

States Secretary of the Treasury

Private collection, Saudi Arabia

Peter Finer Ltd., London

Davinder Toor, London

Price on request

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Zebregs&Röell

+31 6 207 43671

dickie@zebregroell.com

www.zebregroell.com

A *zanburak*, pronounced *zamburak*, is known in Arabic, Persian and Turkish as wasp, bee or hornet. 'Zambur' means hornet, and 'ak' is the diminutive - so 'little wasp'. These swivel guns were carried by camels and were used by the Persians in the eighteenth century until their demise in 1849. In battle, the animals would be restrained on their knees and loaded as bombardiers, after which the weapons would be fired from atop their backs. Zamburaks were the Indian response to European horse artillery. However, the zamburaks were less mobile and thus less maneuverable than horse artillery. An Ottoman example of one of these guns mounted on a camel is illustrated by Marsigli in *L'Etat militaire de l'Empire Ottoman* in 1732. During the Sikh Wars (1846-1847 & 1848-1849), the speed of movement of the European horse artillery made the zamburaks useless. They were too slow, and their power was inadequate. They couldn't catch up with the European horse artillery. That doesn't, however, make them less impressive and frightening.

Sources:

Roy Kaushik, 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849', in: *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 69, no. 3, 2005, p. 662

Robert Elgood, *Firearms of the Islamic World in the Tareq Rajab Museum*, Kuwait, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1995, p. 137-139





महादुरसिंहजीराजस्पा



19

HEIRLOOM COMB

Sumba, Indonesia
Water buffalo horn
20 cm x 18 cm
Price: 3.500 USD

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Thomas Murray
M.: +1 415.378.0716
E.: thomas@tmurrayarts.com
W.: www.tmurrayarts.com





20

**A RARE GOLD
PECTORAL DISC**

Central timor, Indonesia

Meo, Atoni tribe

Late 19th century

Weight: 107 grs

Diam.: 18,3 cm

Provenance:

Private Dutch collection

Price: 5.500 euros

Made from low carat gold with designs composed of small hammered dots to the surface echoing some constellation of the stars. It was used as a badge of honour and was awarded for bravery in particular associated with head hunting.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Sue Ollemans

M.: + 44 (0) 7775 566 356

E.: sue@ollemans.com

W: www.ollemans.com



21

**STANDING BUDDHA
AYUTTHAYĀ**

Ayutthayā, Thailand

17th century

Bronze with brown and green patina

Height: 87 cm

Provenance:

Galerie Annie Minet

Moreau-Gobard from 1989 onwards

Price on request

Ayutthaya, capital of the kingdom of Siam, was the cradle of a heterogeneous art whose stylistic influences emanated from the empires and kingdoms of Dvāravat, Angkor, and even Sukhothai. This art, produced and disseminated throughout the kingdom, drew its inspiration from Buddhist scriptures. This bronze Buddha from the 17th century, whose features easily reflect the Sukhothai imprint on the art of Ayutthaya, is a case in point. Standing on a lotus, his highly stylised, lanky anatomy highlights the rigid, frontal aspect of the divinity, and thus his dehumanisation. The Buddha has long, slender legs covered by a dhoti, the flap of which reaches down to his ankles. The long, supple arms are reminiscent of those of the Sukhothai Buddha, whose distinctive shape is reminiscent of an elephant's trunk. The Buddha is adorned with a crown, the golden patina of which highlights the floral and geometric decorations. His half-closed eyes reveal his peaceful attitude. The Sukhothai features are also evident on his face, where large, thin eyebrows extend to an aquiline nose. With his right hand, his fingers long and delicate, the Buddha performs the abhaya mudra, a sign of protection. The lobes of his ears are elongated because of heavy earrings. Buddhas of this type usually carry a flame above their cranial protuberance. This Buddha represents the prosperity and power of the kingdom of Ayutthayā. Depicted in this majestic pose, standing and crowned, he is also the "universal sovereign" of Cakravartin.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Christophe Hioco

T: +33 (0) 1 53 30 09 65

E: info@galeriehioco.comW: www.galeriehioco.com





22

HEADHUNTER'S COMB

Timor

Horn, silver, beadwork, fiber

17,8 cm x 8,9 cm x 13,9 cm

Price: 4.500 USD

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Thomas Murray

M.: +1 415.378.0716

E.: thomas@tmurrayarts.com

W.: www.tmurrayarts.com







23

CHESTNUT FLOWERS ON A KNOLL

A pair of four-fold screens

Japan

Edo period

17th/18th century

Ink, colour and gold leaf on paper

107 cm x 190 cm

Provenance:

Private Italian collection

Price: 34.000 euros

Chestnut (*kuri*). The Japanese for dried chestnut is *kachiguri* which shares the sound of the word for victory, *kachi*, and had special meaning for warriors of the feudal period. Associated with the ceremonies of troops departing for battle and returning home in triumph, it was ultimately adopted as an auspicious *mon* (family crest).

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Gregg Baker Asian Art

M: +32 (0) 468 00 56 85

E: info@japanesescreens.com

W: www.japanesescreens.com







24

RANK BADGE (HYUNGBAE)

Korea

Joseon dynasty (1392 – 1910)

Circa 1900

Embroidery on a damask-weave silk

Height: 20,5 cm

Width: 18.5 cm

Provenance:

French collection dispersed in the 1990s

Price: 750 USD

This badge is in pristine condition, having never been sewn to a garment, or exposed to light. It still retains its original paper backing. The animal that is depicted is the *hopyo*, a hybrid mythical creature partly inspired by the leopard. Such badges were created for use by military officials of the first to the third rank.

Korean rank badges were much influenced by Chinese badges, and follow a cosmological format, with the mountain at the bottom representing the earth, framed by waves at either side, symbolic of the oceans, and the clouds above, indicating the sky.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Alan Kennedy

M: +1 646 753-4938

E: kennedyalan@hotmail.com

W: www.alankennedyasianart.com







25

IRON GA'U

Ga'u or Portable shrine

Eastern Tibet

Kham Province

15th century

Iron

12 cm (w) x 9 cm (h) x 4,6 cm (D.)

Provenance:

Private collection, London

Price on request

This amulet box or ga'u from Tibet made in iron, is rounded with a flattened base. The front is in the repoussé technique and chased in high relief with the image of Buddha seated in padmasana on a lotus throne. Underneath is a platform piled with several layers of textile decorated with floral motifs. The Buddha is holding a bowl in his left hand, which may refer to the Buddha of healing and medicine (Bhaisajyaguru). It could also represent Akshobhya, the guardian of the East.

The Buddha has a halo around his head, a decorative halo emanates from his body. The background is decorated with scrolling lotus leaves. The sides are engraved with leafy scrollwork. A ring on each side allowed the box to be attached to a belt, worn across the chest.

The backside is engraved with a double vajra on a background filled with floral motifs.

The iron material and the long narrow face of the Buddha indicate an early date.

Ga'us were found in Tibet and Bhutan. They were stored on a domestic altar or worn during traveling.

Iron ga'us are relatively rare. An exemple is illustrated in Chose (2016, p. 46) and in Clarke (2004, p. 24), both attributed to the 15th century.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Farah Massart

M.: +32 495 289 100

E.: art@famarte.beW: www.famarte.com





26

AUREOLE

Nepal

Late 12-13th century

Gilded copper alloy

12,3 cm x 11,5 cm

Provenance:

The Nyingjei Lam collection

Price on request

An aureole halo of Nepalese origin, crafted from a lavish copper alloy with a gilded finish, showcases the distinctive post-India Pala style, transports us to the late 12th to 13th century, unveiling its beauty and intricate details. At its core, a finely engraved panel captures our attention, adorned with delicate traces of red Newari pigment.

Flanking this central panel are two makaras at the bottom, sea monsters with fierce expressions, facing opposite directions, continuing the ornate composition, two elephants stand gracefully on lotus petals, evoking a sense of regality and divine presence. Above them, two deities holding fly whisks, majestically ride upon lions, embodying strength and authority. Further above, two other makaras with meticulously crafted flaming tails add a dynamic element to the aureole.

While the passage of time may have caused some parts to be missing, it reveals the sacredness and treasured nature of this artifact. Notably, an ancient replacement of the makara on the lower right side suggests the halo's significance to past devotees, who sought to preserve its integrity and spiritual essence.

The front of the aureole shines resplendently, owing to the lavish gilding, while the reverse showcases the raw beauty of the copper alloy, highlighting the craftsmanship and the harmonious blend of metals.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Hollywood Galleries

T.: +852 2559 8688

+852 2541 6338

E.: hollywoodgalleries@gmail.com

W: www.hollywood-galleries.com





27

VAJRAHUMKARA

Western Himalaya

11-12th century

Lapis lazuli

7 cm x 5,8 cm

Provenance:

The Nyingjei Lam collection

Publication:

David Weldon and Jane Casey Singer, *The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet: Buddhist Art in the Nyingjei Lam*

Collection, London, 1999, p.69, fig.40.

Price on request

In the realm of artistic rarities, an extraordinary rare sculpture emerges from the depths of history—the Vajrahumkara, carved from the precious gemstone Lapis lazuli in the 11th to 12th century. This masterpiece hails from the regions of western Himalayas, its creation likely rooted in the mining of Lapis lazuli in Afghanistan and subsequent importation to Kashmir and then Western Himalayan regions.

The sculpture depicts Vajrahumkara, a revered deity, adorned with a triangular crown inspired by the distinctive Kashmiri style. With three faces and six arms, this divine figure exudes a sense of transcendent power. The primary pair of hands gracefully form the Bhütadamara mudra, symbolizing the subjugation of negative forces. The remaining hands hold a cakra wheel, a lotus stem, and possibly an aśoka blossom flower, symbolising the teachings of the Buddha, purity and compassion.

Standing upon lotus petals in the pratyaldhāsana pose, Vajrahumkara emanates an aura of serenity and authority. Notably, the shape of this carved stone suggests that it may have once been inserted into the crown of a grand statue, reminiscent of the 8th-century gilded goddess from Sri Lanka housed in the British Museum.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Hollywood Galleries

T.: +852 2559 8688

+852 2541 6338

E.: hollywoodgalleries@gmail.com

W: www.hollywood-galleries.com



28

MAHAKALA SHADBHUJA

Tibet

17th century

Bronze with polychrome

Height: 15 cm

HAR item no. 35867

Provenance:

Toronto collection, acquired from Spink and Sons, c. 1995.

Acquired by the current owner from a public sale, Toronto, 10 June 2013. Christie's, New York, 14 March 2017, Lot 209.

Price on request

Mahakala is the primary Buddhist *Dharmapala* and is respected in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In Sanskrit, *Maha* translates to “great” and *Kala* to “time/death.” All names and colors are said to melt into Mahakala, symbolizing his all-encompassing nature and lustrous black skin. He is seen as the absolute reality. Shadbhuja, the six-armed Mahakala, is a favorite amongst the Gelukpa order of Tibetan Buddhism. Shadbhuja is recognized as the fierce, powerful, and wrathful embodiment of the Bodhisattva of compassion Avalokitesvara.

In this elegantly cast piece, attention to fine detail is evident throughout the six-armed form. In the primary left hand is a skull cap (*kapala*) filled with minced remains of enemies to Dharma. In the primary right hand is a crescent shaped chopper (*katrika*) or curved knife, which fits to the shape of the skull cap so it can be utilized for making the “mincemeat.” The chopper is a representation of detachment from samsaric existence. Within the secondary right hand lies a *damaru*, an hourglass-shaped drum which arouses the mentally-clouded from their ignorant state, putting them back onto the path of Dharma. The sound which emanates from the damaru is supposed to be the same as that which manifested all of existence. A rosary of dried skulls adorns the uppermost right hand; this symbolizes the perpetual activity of Mahakala on a cosmic scale, as rings are inherently continuous. The secondary left hand holds a noose, whose function is to lasso those straying from the divine path of Dharma. The skin of an elephant is held taut across the back of Mahakala in his upper left hand, symbolizing the ability to overcome delusion.

OBJECT PRESENTED BY:

Kapoor Galleries

M.: +1 (212) 794-2300

E.: info@kapoors.com

W: www.kapoors.com

